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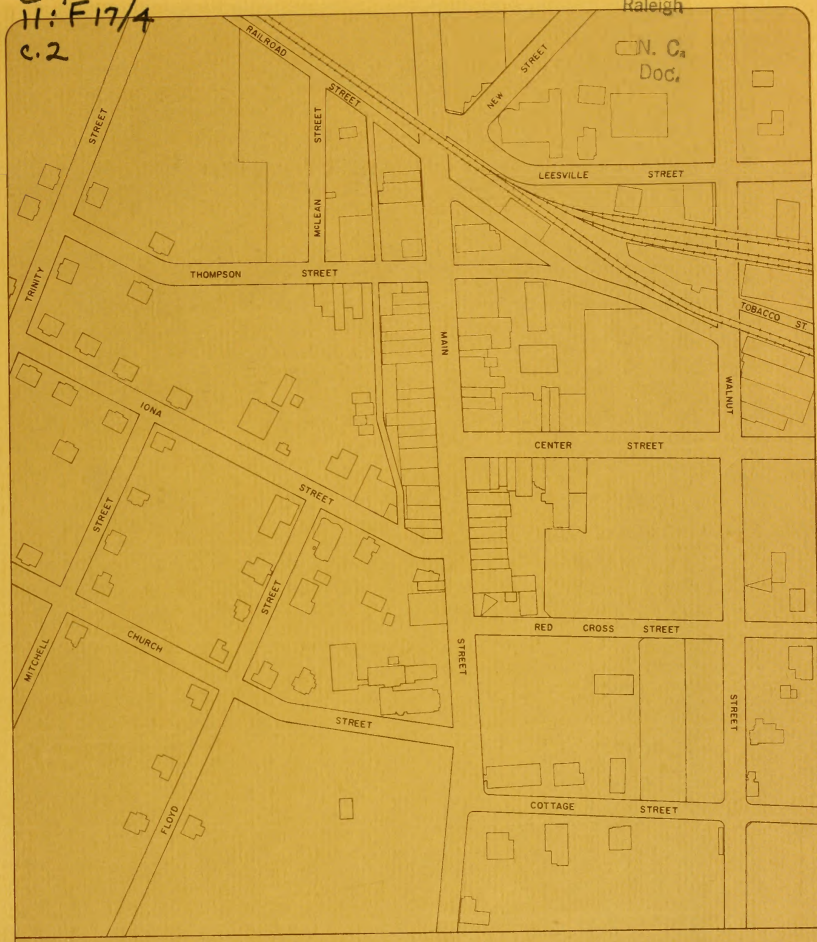


CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT PLAN

FAIRMONT, NORTH CAROLINA

ABSTRACT

TITLE - Fairmont Central Business District

AUTHOR- State of North Carolina, Department of Conservation and Development, Division of Community Planning

SUBJECT- Central Business District Study

DATE- December 1968

LOCAL PLANNING AGENCY- The Town of Fairmont, North Carolina Planning Board

SOURCE OF COPIES- The Town of Fairmont, North Carolina Town Hall, Fairmont, North Carolina

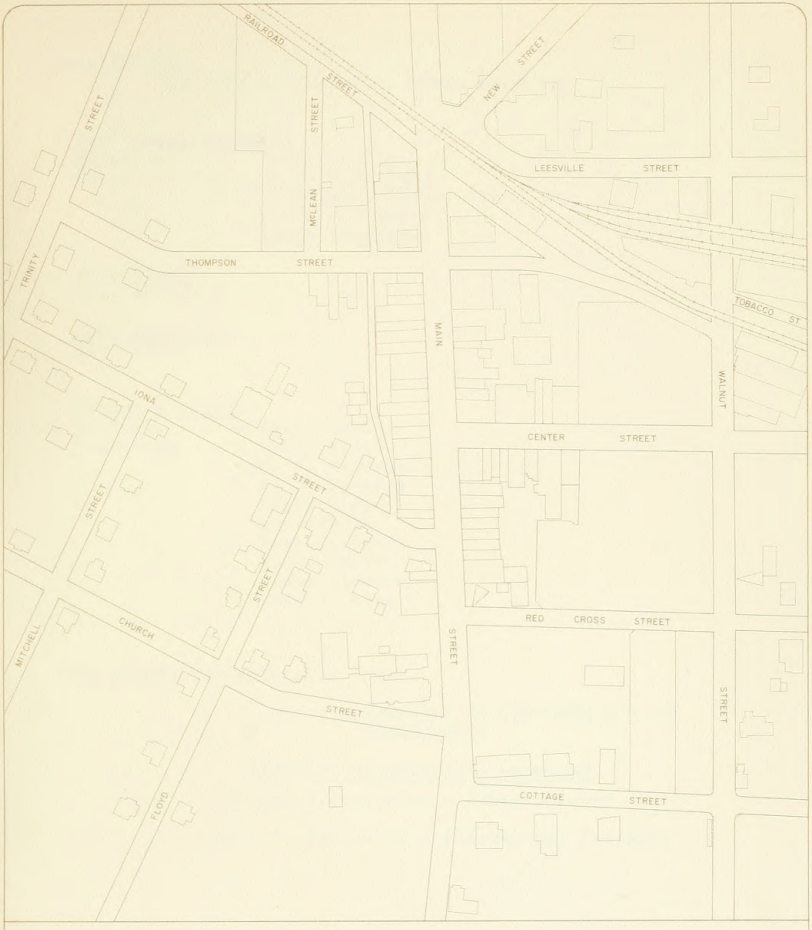
HUD PROJECT NUMBER - NCP-44

SERIES NUMBER- One of Two

NUMBER OF PAGES- 61

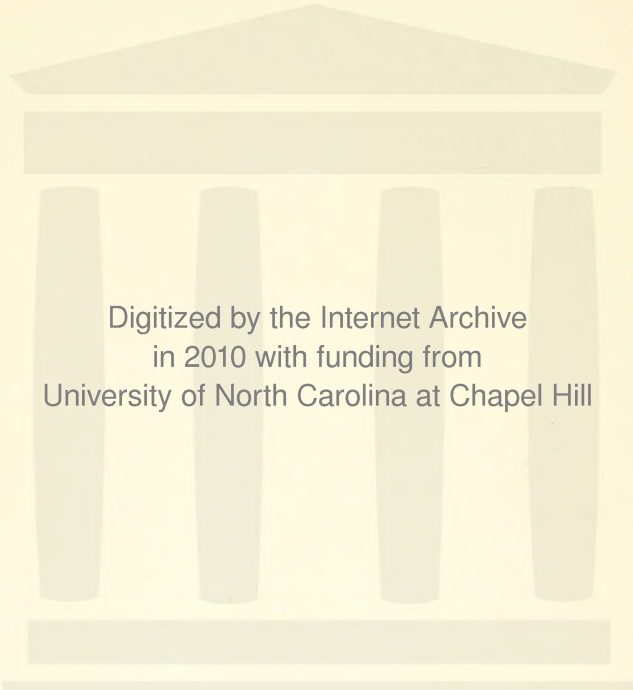
ABSTRACT- The Central Business District Priliminary Plan makes recommendations for an improved land use pattern, appearance, walkways, parking, and traffic conditions. Improvements of shopping convenience is one of the objectives of the Plan.

Existing conditions of traffic, walkways, buildings, canopies, and parking was studied. Economic trends were also reviewed in the Plan.



CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT PLAN

FAIRMONT, NORTH CAROLINA



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The preparation of this report was financed in part through an urban planning grant from the Department of Housing and Urban Development, under the provision of Section 701 of the Housing Act of 1954, as amended.

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DECEMBER 1968

PRICE - $2.00

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INTRODUCTION

A central business district development plan is presented in this report. Past trends in population, income, and retail sales were studied in order to project the need for floor space, parking, traffic and pedestrian circulation on the plan.

Development of the Fairmont central business district began many years ago. Buildings have been added over the years without an overall plan to coordinate the physical facilities (streets, parking, sidewalks, buildings, etc.) in the central business district. Buildings and facilities have become obsolete as people demand more shopping convenience. Some of the stores are not large enough for today's merchandising methods.

Although some of the merchants have attempted to improve their businesses by adding canopies, renovating buildings or leasing vacant lots for parking areas, there has been no coordinated effort to solve the major problems that keep Fairmont merchants from increasing their sales.

A large number of the more affluent customers now journey to Lumberton, North Carolina or Florence, South Carolina to shop. The present disorganized arrangement of shops in downtown Fairmont does not compare favorably with the shopping areas in these towns. It is essential that if the merchants desire to increase their sales, that a coordinated downtown improvement program be undertaken.

The problems of the downtown area should be solved before more of the local trade is lost, for when shopping patterns are broken, they are more difficult to re-establish.

More local sales will result in greater local employment. Additional jobs added in retail trade establishments are equally as important as those added in new industry.

REGIONAL SETTING

REGIONAL SETTING

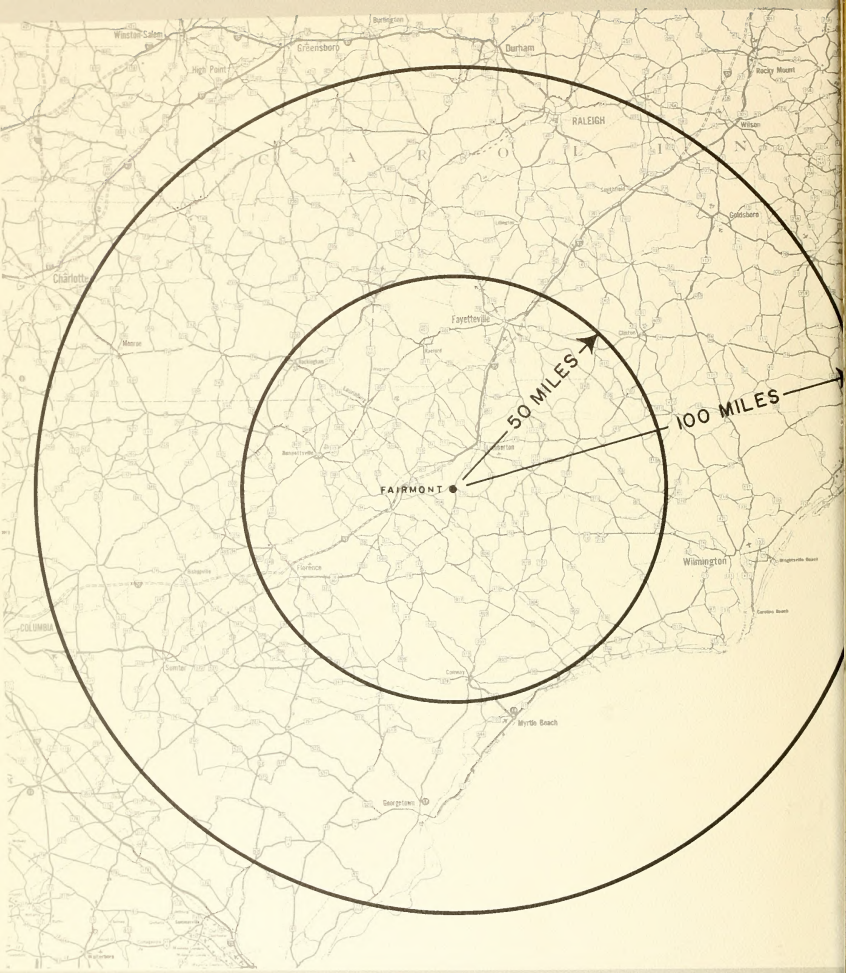
The Town of Fairmont is located in Robeson County, North Carolina. Lumberton, the county seat, lies eleven miles to the north and the South Carolina line is ten miles to the south. As the second largest town in the county, Fairmont serves as the retail trade center for the southeastern one-third of the county.

Fairmont's relationship to the larger cities of North Carolina is shown on the Regional Setting Map. Larger North Carolina cities located within fifty highway miles are:

City	Distance From Fairmont	Population[1/]
Fayetteville	44	47,106
Lumberton	11	15,305
Laurinburg	32	8,242

Interstate Highway No. 95 runs six miles to the west. The proposed route for four-lane U. S. 74 (major link between Charlotte and Wilmington) is approximately ten miles to the north.

1/ U. S. Census of Population, 1960.



REGIONAL SETTING

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ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

In this section of the study the retail trade area is delineated and economic trends are analyzed. Past and present trends of population, employment, and income in the trade area were studied in relation to retail sales.

Retail Trade Area (Area of economic influence)

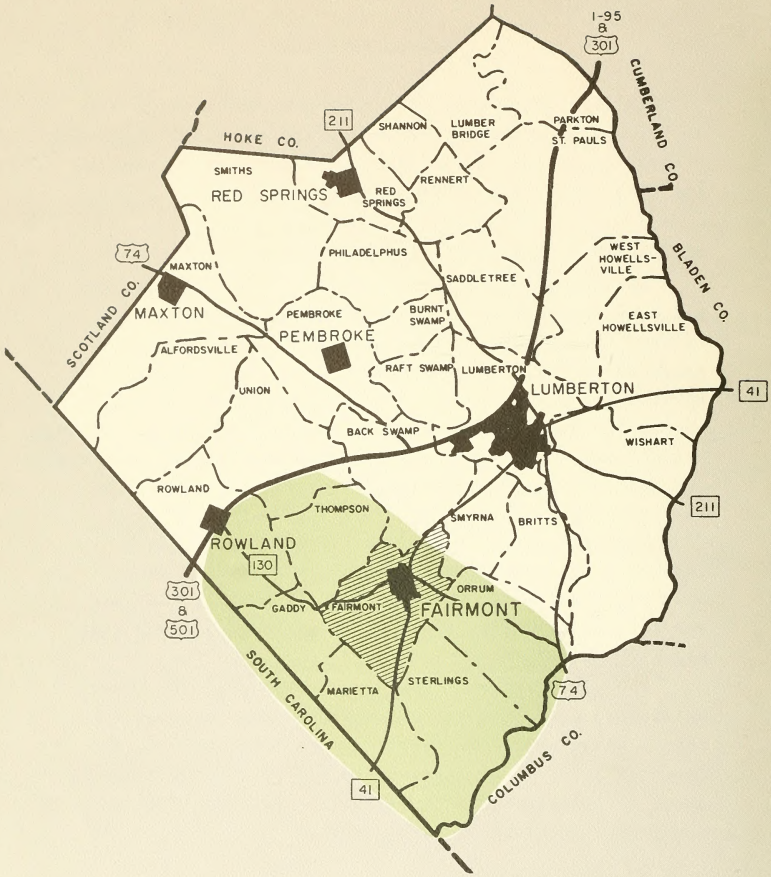
Local commerce fluctuates with income received by Fairmont customers. The primary retail trade area as defined for this study encompasses a region from which Fairmont merchants may expect to draw over 50 percent of their retail sales. Most of the sales of the central business district come from within the trade area, although a small percentage of sales is drawn from beyond that area. The business growth of Fairmont is therefore virtually dependent upon the economy of the trade area.

The primary trade area, delineated by Reilly's formula,[1/] includes the townships of Fairmont, Orrum, Sterlings, Marietta, Gaddy, Thompson, half of Rowland, and a third of Union, as shown on the Retail Trade Area Map.

The circulation of the local newspaper, the Times-Messenger, also provides a comparison for checking the retail trade area. Newspaper advertising influences a customer's choice of shopping facilities, and therefore, plays an important part in establishing the trade area. Newspaper circulation covers somewhat the same area as

---

[1/] Reilly's formula is a commonly used mathematical method for delineating a trade area. The formula primarily relates the drawing power of the central business district to the population of the town, and to good highways into the town. Larger communities generally have a greater trade area, often overlapping smaller communities. For example, Lumberton's retail trade area overlaps that of Fairmont.



RETAIL TRADE AREA

FAIRMONT RETAIL TRADE AREA[1]

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[1] REILLY'S FORMULA COMPUTED BY THE DIVISION OF COMMUNITY PLANNING

that delineated by Reilly's formula except that it does not extend as far to the west into Union and Rowland townships.

In questioning the sixty merchants operating stores in the Fairmont Business District, they estimated 93 percent of their sales came from within the trade area delineated on the map following page 5 .

Merchants Survey[1/]	Estimated Percent of Sales
Town limits of Fairmont	29.0
Retail Trade Area (outside Town)	63.0
Area beyond Retail Trade Area	9.0
	100.0

POPULATION

Population trends and projections for Fairmont are shown on Table 1. It is rather significant that the township population showed a small increase from 1950 to 1960 but the town population decreased. The land use survey revealed that approximately 800 people live adjacent to the town, which indicates a shift in population to the fringe areas.

TABLE 1

FAIRMONT POPULATION INCREASE[a/] IN RATE AND NUMBER

Year	Fairmont Population	Number Increase	Percentage Increase
1920	1,000		
1930	1,314	314	31.4
1940	1,993	679	51.7
1950	2,319	326	16.4
1960	2,286	-33	-1.4
1970	2,700	414	18.1
1980	3,100	400	14.8
1985	3,400	300	--

[a/] U. S. Census of Population. Projections by the Division of Community Planning.

[1/] Survey made by the Division of Community Planning.

INCOME

Income reflects both population and employment growth. Income affects retail sales and the growth of businesses in the central business district. (Approximately 67 percent of the total personal income in North Carolina is spent directly for retail goods). The percentage of family income spent for retail trade is much higher in an area when the per capita income is below that of the State average. People in the lower income groups must spend more of their income for the consumption goods (the necessities of life).

The percentage distribution of income by family in the retail trade area by townships compared with the State is shown on Table 3. There is a much larger percentage of families in the under $3,000 class in Fairmont and the Townships of the retail trade area. This is the result of greater percentage of employment in lower paying jobs (textile and agriculture).

The low per capita income found in the retail trade area is closely related to the lack of manufacturing employment, low education, etc.

Distribution of Incomes

The scale of family income determines the kind and price of merchandise desired. The distribution of families by income groups is an important factor which must be considered in the merchandising of goods. Within the townships of the retail trade area from 62 to 83 percent of all families earn less than $3,000[1/] annually. Some increases in family income have taken place during the past six years, however.

[1/] U. S. Census of Population, 1960.

TABLE 3

COMPARISON 1959 PERSONAL INCOME OF TOWNSHIPS
OF THE RETAIL TRADE AREA WITH THE STATE

PERCENT DISTRIBUTION OF TOTAL FAMILIES BY FAMILY INCOME GROUP

Income Class	Townships								
	Fairmont	Orrum	Sterlings	Marietta	Gaddy	Rowland[a] (4)	Union[a] (1/3)	Thompson	State
Under $3,000	65.1	66.1	62.2	62.7	83.3	68.4	83.1	81.9	37.1
$3,000 - $7,999	28.0	29.4	28.8	31.7	15.0	24.4	14.2	11.9	49.3
$8,000 - over	6.9	4.5	9.0	5.6	1.7	7.2	2.7	6.2	13.6
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Family (Median)	$1,874	$1,960	$2,136	$1,826	$1,194	$1,662	$1,009	$ 925	$3,956
Per Capita Total	744	586	806	622	410	597	359	397	1,260
White Per Capita	1,444	862	1,062	920	781	1,386	892	1,946	1,504
Nonwhite Per Capita	320	244	118	301	230	267	227	200	543

Source: U. S. Census of Population, 1960.

Special tables PH-3 and PH-5 - 1960 unpublished census compiled by Division of Community Planning.

[a] Includes only a portion of this total township.

The $3,000 - $7,999 income group of families include about half of all families in the State average, but a substantially smaller percentage of all families within the townships of the retail trade area (12 to 32 percent).

Only about one-half as many families in Fairmont Township (7 percent) earn $8,000 and over when compared to the State average (14 percent).

RETAIL SALES

The growth and development of the central business district is dependent on increases in retail sales. Increases in retail sales often result in profits and improvements to the physical facilities of the central business district.

Fairmont

From the records of the North Carolina Department of Revenue, it was estimated that retail sales in Fairmont were $5.2 million or 6.3 percent of the county 1963 total of $82.9 million.

Retail sales for Robeson County are compared with surrounding counties in Table 4. Total retail sales in the county were greater than all other surrounding counties except Cumberland. The rate of sales increase in Robeson (51 percent) between 1958 and 1963 surpassed all the surrounding counties. Much of Robeson County's increase in sales took place in Lumberton. Retail trade establishments are being added in Lumberton at a rate five times greater than the county average. Table 1 in the Appendix indicates that the number of retail establishments in Lumberton increased by 32.1 percent compared with 6.7 percent in the remainder of the county from 1958 to 1963.

A total personal income of $10.6 million was reported in the Retail Trade Area in 1960. At the State ratio

of income to retail sales,[1] sales in the Retail Trade Area of approximately $7.1 million should have reached Fairmont, but retail sales totaled only $4.5 million in 1960. One possibility is that business is going elsewhere, to Lumberton and to other larger communities. This information indicates that Fairmont is not receiving its "fair share" of retail trade.

TABLE 4

RETAIL SALES TRENDS FOR ROBESON & SURROUNDING COUNTIES[a]

	Total Retail Sales			Percent Change	
	1954 ($000)	1958 ($000)	1963 ($000)	1954-58	1958-63
Robeson	55,099	54,970	82,876	1.6	50.8
Scotland	15,234	16,702	24,994	9.6	49.6
Richmond	28,905	34,443	39,681	19.0	15.2
Moore	25,213	30,362	39,390	20.4	29.7
Hoke	5,638	6,283	8,498	11.4	35.3
Cumberland	99,843	114,241	169,443	14.4	48.3

[a] U. S. Census of Business.

Retail Specialization

Robeson County, when compared with surrounding counties, is more specialized in food stores, lumber establishments, drug stores, gas stations, and other retail stores. Items that registered over 100 in Table 5 indicate specialization. There is a lack of specialization, however, in eating and drinking places, furniture

[1] Total State personal income divided into total State retail sales and services sales indicated 67 percent of income is spent for retail sales and service in North Carolina.

stores, household appliance stores, and nonstore retailers such as catalog sales. Low sales volume at eating and drinking establishments is a characteristic of most rural areas. Due to the small amount of travel time involved and to low income, many people either carry a lunch or go home to eat.

TABLE 5

INDEX OF RETAIL SPECIALIZATION - 1963[a/]
ROBESON & SURROUNDING COUNTIES

	Robeson	Scot-land	Rich-mond	Cumber-land	Moore	Hoke	Economic Area 9
Food	106	118	112	83	128	135	100
Eating and drinking places	[48]	40	133	126	119	21	100
General Merchandise	[81]	89	89	122	61	117	100
Apparel	87	113	125	105	80	44	100
Furniture, household appliances	[72]	59	62	134	57	131	100
Automotive	89	100	101	112	75	76	100
Gas Stations	98	119	117	84	123	199	100
Lumber, etc.	151	162	51	82	92	67	100
Drugs	112	96	100	88	154	38	100
Other retail stores	156	47	76	76	148	66	100
Nonstore retailers	[47]	106	212	106	71	6	100

[a/] U. S. Census of Business, 1963.

[ ] Deficiency in Sales.

MERCHANTS OPINION SURVEY

MERCHANTS OPINION SURVEY*

Eight questions were asked of the 60 merchants of the central business district; all responded. (Appendix B, Table 2). Significant answers received are discussed below:

Over half the 60 merchants leased their buildings (62%) but most leased from a local owner. Merchants estimate that 8% of their sales come from outside the area delineated on the retail trade area map. The 60 merchants employed 277 people. Normally 212 persons (including the merchants) drive to work although only 282 off-street spaces are provided. Most of the off-street parking spaces are used by the merchants and their employees.

The 60 merchants occupy a total of 158,400 square feet of building space, and 20% plan to expand their building within five years, by an average of 1,800 square feet each. This building expansion would result in an additional 12 persons being employed in the central business district.

Most of the merchants questioned were satisfied with their present business location. Approximately 78% felt the present supply of parking space within the central business district was not adequate. (They generally agreed that additional off-street parking would solve the problem.) Over one-half the merchants were willing to contribute financially to provide additional off-street parking, and felt the individual merchant or merchant's corporations should finance the additional off-street parking.

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*The merchants opinion survey covered the 60 principal merchants found in the Fairmont's central business district (almost a 100% survey), and was conducted during August, 1967.

An action program recommended by the merchants is as follows in order of priority:

1. Provide more off-street parking.
2. Improve the interior appearance of stores.
3. Improve the exterior appearance of stores.
4. Provide public restrooms downtown.
5. Place tub plants downtown.

The merchants expressed dissatisfaction with employees who utilize choice parking spaces along Main Street, and with the lack of enforcement of the parking regulations. If the choice on-street parking spaces along Main Street were used every hour by a new customer, each space would be nearly as effective as six - an important consideration when there are not enough spaces to go around, especially on Saturdays.

DELINEATION OF THE CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

DELINEATION OF THE CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

There are a number of methods used to determine the area that is encompassed in the central business district. This includes such criteria as: greatest concentration of traffic, and greatest intensity of sales to determine the limits of the central business district. After considering the above items, the central business district study area was delineated. As shown on the Existing Land Use Map, it extends from Cottage Street to the railroad, encompassing both sides of Main and Walnut Streets. Within this study area, the central business district core area was outlined. This is the area that generally has the greatest concentration of pedestrian traffic.

The area located outside the central business district core is defined as the central business district fringe area.

USES OF BUILDINGS

USES OF BUILDINGS

A survey of building space was made by the Division of Community Planning during August, 1967. Space was grouped into one of ten categories. The use of each building is shown on the Existing Land Use Map. A tabulation of both ground and upper floors is included in Table 6.

Core Area

The largest amount of space in the core area is used for storage (30.5%). Included in this category is the second floor of a large number of the buildings fronting on Main Street. Although classified as storage, only a small amount of the space in the upper floors of stores facing Main Street is being used for this purpose. Most of the space is vacant. Storage space is decreasing in importance. The second most important use of space in the central business district core is for primary trade use which includes 19.0% of the total floor space. Classified as primary trade are the department stores, apparel shops, variety stores, shoe stores, etc. Primary trade use is followed in importance by consumer service use, which includes the hotel, barber and beauty shops, etc. (17.0%). Social and cultural use is the fourth most important use (11.3%). It is followed in importance by convenience trade (8.4%) and administrative, financial and advisory services (6.7%).

Fringe Area

In the central business district study area outside the core (fringe area) most of the space is used for wholesale and storage. Included are the large tobacco warehouses fronting along Walnut Street. Secondary trade is the second most important use of space (7.4% of the

total). Included in this category are the automobile dealers and the farm sales establishments located north of the railroad.

Each category of building space beginning with primary trade is next discussed in more detail.

TABLE 6

CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT
FLOOR SPACE - 1967[1]

	Core		Fringe Area (Outside Core)		Study Area	
Type of Use	Sq. Ft.	% of Total	Sq. Ft.	% of Total	Sq. Ft.	% of Total
Primary Trade	56,800	18.8	--	0.0	56,800	7.0
Secondary Trade	13,900	4.6	37,300	7.4	51,200	6.3
Convenience Trade	25,300	8.4	15,800	3.1	41,100	5.1
Consumer Services	51,400	17.0	1,100	.2	52,500	6.5
Social and Cultural	34,300	11.3	10,800	2.1	45,100	5.6
Administrative, Financial, and Advisory	20,200	6.7	200		20,400	2.5
Wholesale and Storage	92,300	30.5	415,500	82.3	507,800	62.8
Manufacturing and Industrial Services	--		25,000	4.9	25,000	3.1
Vacant Buildings	8,500	2.7	--		8,500	1.1
Total	302,700	100.0	505,700	100.0	808,400	100.0
Residential	--		95,000		95,000	
	302,700		600,700		903,400	

[1] Source: Survey by the Division of Community Planning, August, 1967.

- PRIMARY TRADE
- SECONDARY TRADE
- CONVENIENCE TRADE
- CONSUMER SERVICES
- SOCIAL & CULTURAL
- ADMINISTRATIVE FINANCIAL & ADVISORY
- WHOLESALE & STORAGE
- MANUFACTURING & INDUSTRIAL SERVICES
- RESIDENTIAL
- VACANT BUILDINGS

EXISTING LAND USE
FAIRMONT N.C.
CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

SCALE IN FEET

SURVEY BY THE DIVISION OF COMMUNITY PLANNING AUGUST, 1967

FLOOR SPACE BY CATEGORY

Primary Trade

Buildings located in the Fairmont central business district that are included in this category are: Johnson Cotton Company General Merchandise, Popes, Levinson's Dry Goods, Jacksons Department Store, Fairmont Department Store, A.F. Floyd General Merchandise, Forester's Mens' and Boys' Wear, M. S. Griffin & Son General Merchandise, Fairmont Discount Merchandise, Dixie Department Store, Floyd's Clothing, Carolina Department Store, Pope's General Merchandise and P. R. Floyd & Son Clothing. All of the primary trade space fronts on Main Street and is located in the core area.

Primary trade should be grouped in compact areas where pedestrian concentrations are greatest so shoppers can make comparison in style, price, etc. before buying.

Secondary Trade

Buildings of this type include establishments selling furniture (C. A. Floyd & Sons), seed and farm supplies (Fairmont Service, FCX, Oliver Feed and Seed), appliance (Western Auto), and automobile dealers (Rawls Chevrolet Company). The secondary establishments are located for the most part in the fringe area where parking is available.

Secondary trade establishments sell high bulk items that require considerable floor space for display. Many secondary trade establishments have relocated from the core area to Walnut Street where better access is available for traffic. Vehicle rather than pedestrian access is more important for secondary trade establishments.

Convenience Trade

Establishments of this type include drug stores (Fairmont Drug Company, Webster Drug Company); Service stations (Fedder & Son, Phillips 66, and American); grocery stores (Fisher Bros. Grocery, Center Street Fish Market, Jenkins Supermarket, Mitchell's Food, Sessoms Grocery, and A & P Grocery), and hardware stores (A. L. Miller, Ford's and Robeson). Many convenience trade establishments are moving from the core to the fringe area and to Walnut Street. This is particularly true of grocery stores and gas stations.

Convenience trade includes shops that sell items that are used daily; easy access and convenient parking is important for these establishments. Because of the limited amount of parking available in the core area, many of the new establishments of this type will probably locate in the fringe area.

Consumer Services

Consumer service establishments include barber shops (Kinlan's, Fairmont, Mutts, and Locklear); beauty shops (Capital, Doris, Libbie's); post office; theatre; several dry cleaning establishments; Times-Messenger newspaper office; and the Fairmont Hotel. All of the above establishments are located in the central business district core.

Administrative, Financial and Advisory Services

This use includes the Town Hall, police station, court room, insurance offices, several law offices, a real estate office, the Carolina Power and Light Company office, Southern National Bank, and Waccamaw Bank and Trust Company. All of the above establishments are located in the core area.

Social and Cultural

The First Baptist Church, a doctor's office, a medical clinic, and the Fairmont School include the bulk of this type use. These establishments are located in the fringe area where parking is readily available and land is more reasonably priced.

Wholesale - Storage, Manufacturing and Industrial Services

Most of the space of this type is included in the tobacco warehouses that face Walnut Street, and in the Fairmont Knitting Mill and in the upper floors of stores along Main Street.

Vacant Buildings

There are seven vacant buildings located in the core. These vacant buildings create dead spaces downtown that must be crossed to reach other stores.

VACANT LAND IN THE CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

The Existing Land Use Map indicates very few vacant parcels on Main Street. The Fairmont Hotel block includes the bulk of the vacant space. There is some vacant space on Iona Street and Thompson Street. There are also deteriorating residential structures which could be razed to provide sites for commercial expansion.

PHYSICAL BARRIERS TO CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT EXPANSION

There are a number of barriers to the expansion of the central business district that the Plan must come to grips with: (1) To the east and north are located large tobacco warehouses, (2) To the south are located the

park, Town Hall, Fairmont Hotel, and First Baptist Church, and (3) To the west are located the Fairmont School and good residential development.

Some of the barriers have helped develop a more compact central business district making comparison shopping more convenient. Others restrict the expansion of commercial or parking areas and must be dealt with in the Plan. (See CBD Expansion Barriers Map.)

FUNCTIONAL GROUPINGS OF FLOOR SPACE - 1987

The plan will need to indicate locations for new business establishments, and expansion room for existing business establishments. The grouping of existing and projected floor space determines the need for parking and traffic circulation on the development plan. (See Functional Grouping of Foor Space Map - 1987.)

Projecting floor space needs is extremely difficult. The economic growth information given in the first part of the report is one indication of the space that will be needed by 1987. The need for floor space is affected by a predicted increase in income of 64 percent, and a projected increase in retail sales of 127 percent and a population increase in Fairmont of 53 percent (much of the increase in population would be added by annexations).

Another index of the amount of space needed was revealed by the merchants opinion survey. The merchants estimated an increase of about 30,000 square feet of floor space would be added.

Also affecting the amount of space that will be required in the future is the change in merchandising methods, (elimination of stock rooms, etc.) change in shopping habits (more space needed to display items).

Considering the factors mentioned above and the rather static trade area population, an increase of 55,000

square feet was projected for 1987. (Table 7). This space was provided for on the plan. In addition, buildings classified as substandard have been replaced on the plan.

TABLE 7

CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT
FLOOR SPACE - 1987[1/]

Central Business District
Study Area

Type of Use	Existing Sq. Ft. 1967	New Space Sq. Ft. Needed By 1987	Total[3/] Sq. Ft. 1987	Increase in New[2/] Space Added 1967-1987 (Approximate) Percent
Administrative, Financial and Advisory Services	20,400	12,300	32,700	60
Primary Retail Trade	56,800	18,600	79,400	30
Secondary Retail Trade	51,200	10,000	54,200	20
Convenience Retail Trade	41,100	10,000	44,100	25
Consumer Services	52,500	18,300	65,800	35
	222,000	69,200	276,200	30

[1/] Projections by the Division of Community Planning.

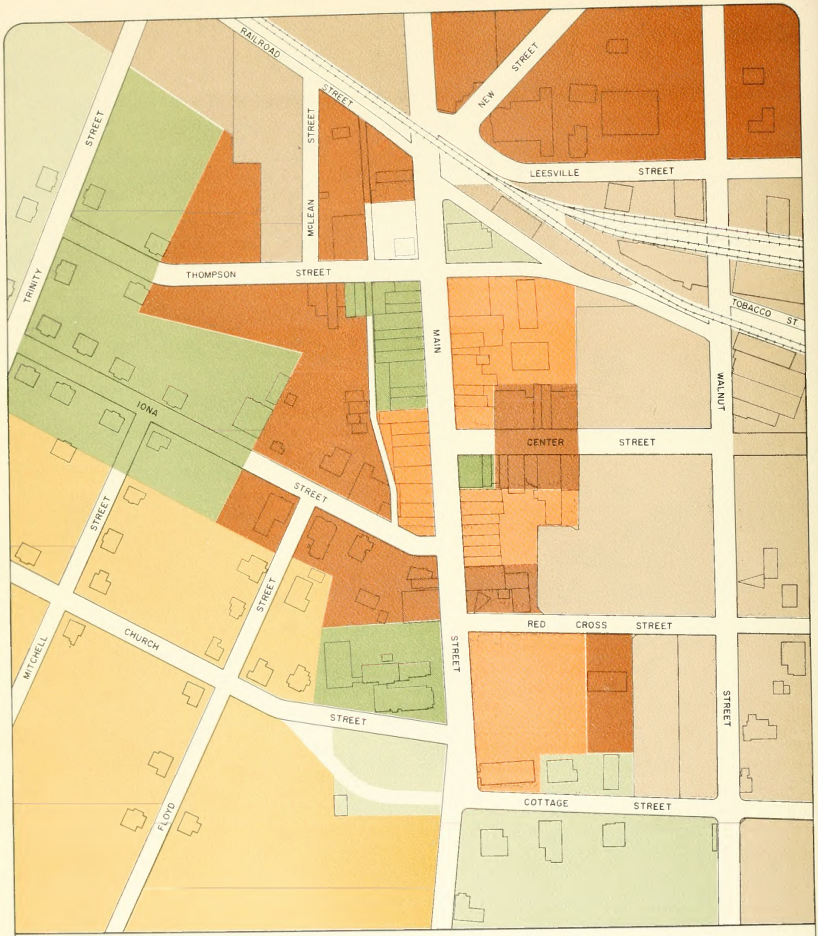
[2/] Includes space need to replace deteriorating buildings and new space to serve the increase in trade area sales.

[3/] Deteriorating space that has been replaced is not included.

CENTRAL BUSINESS EXPANSION BARRIERS

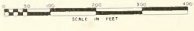
FAIRMONT N.C.

CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT



PRIMARY RETAIL
SECONDARY RETAIL
OFFICE & INSTITUTIONAL
PUBLIC
WHOLESALE & STORAGE
RESIDENTIAL

FUNCTIONAL GROUPINGS OF
FLOOR SPACE - 1987
FAIRMONT N. C.
CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT



BUILDINGS

Condition of Buildings - 1967

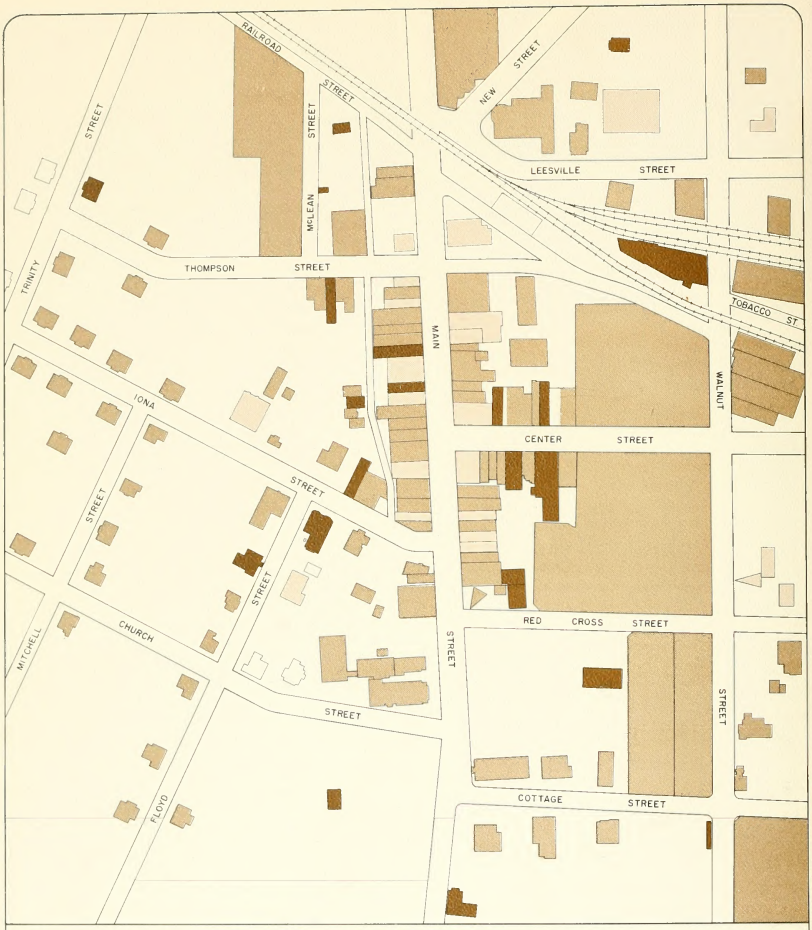
The number of new buildings and the general condition of the existing buildings in the central business district generally indicate the economic prosperity of the retail trade area.

In 1967 the Division of Community Planning made a survey of all the buildings in the central business district, classifying them into one of the following three classes.

Class I	Building in good condition, only normal maintenance necessary to keep it in good condition.
Class II	Building in good condition but requires more than normal maintenance to keep it in good condition.
Class III	Building in poor condition and requires extensive maintenance and repairs and therefore should be removed.

Buildings were plotted on the condition of buildings map by class. Most buildings of the business district are in Class II condition; only about twenty-one buildings in the study area are in Class I condition. Buildings in Class III condition are located along Center Street (4), along Red Cross Street (2), and on Main Street (2). There are also some old warehouses in the fringe area and a number of residences to the west in Class III condition.

Dilapidated residences to the west will probably be displaced by expanding businesses. Those residences located south of Cottage Street would be displaced by the proposed municipal building. A major problem is the dilapidated commercial structures located in the core. These buildings reduce rent values and distract from the appearance of the central business district and should be renovated or replaced.



CONDITION OF BUILDINGS

FAIRMONT N. C.

CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

CLASS I

CLASS II

CLASS III

N

SCALE IN FEET

Height of Buildings

Most buildings in the central business district study area are one story. A number of the older stores along Main Street include a second story. The upper story is for the most part vacant or used for storage. (See Height of Buildings Map.)

HEIGHT OF BUILDINGS - 1967

NUMBER OF STORIES

ONE
TWO
THREE

FAIRMONT N.C.
CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

N

SCALE IN FEET

CIRCULATION

CIRCULATION

Traffic Circulation - 1967

Average 1966 traffic counts for streets of the central business district are shown on the Traffic Flow Map. Main Street carries the heaviest volumes, 4,000 vehicles per day. New Street is second with 3,000 vehicles per day followed in volumes by Walnut Street with 2,150 vehicles.

All of the streets in the central business district are paved except McLean Street. All existing alleys are also paved. Pavement widths are ample on Main Street (40 feet), Cottage Street (33 feet), Center Street (38 feet), Thompson Street (34 feet), and Walnut Street (34 feet). These streets do not have ample pavement widths: Church Street (24 feet), Railroad Street (20 feet), and Red Cross Street (24 feet).

Curb and gutter is needed on Red Cross, South Main, Railroad and Walnut Streets. On streets without curb and gutter on-street parking is difficult and in some cases not possible. Existing curb and gutter streets include two travel lanes of from ten to twelve feet and two parking lanes of from seven to eight feet.

Most street intersections in the central business district are properly designed. The intersection of Church, Cottage, and Main Streets and New Street, Main and Leesville Streets need to be redesigned. The presence of the railroad tracks makes the intersection at New Street a complex one. Channelization and curbing is needed at this point.

Traffic Circulation - 1987

Implementation of the Fairmont Thoroughfare Plan will solve most of the traffic circulation problems of the central business district. Pavement widths on minor streets

THOROUGHFARE PLAN

FAIRMONT, N.C.

THOROUGHFARE PLAN

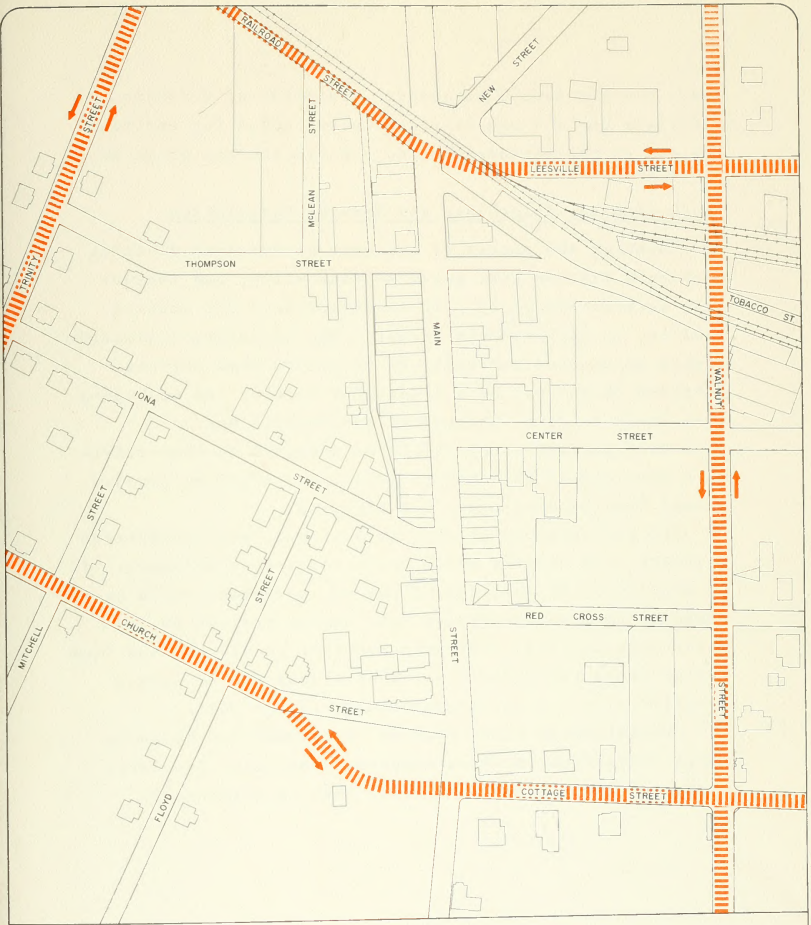
ADOPTED BY FAIRMONT ON APRIL 5, 1966

RECOMMENDED APPROVAL BY ADVANCE PLANNING DEPARTMENT ON APRIL 14, 1966

ADOPTED BY NORTH CAROLINA STATE HIGHWAY COMMISSION ON APRIL 29, 1966

LEGEND

	EXIST. ALIGN.	NEW ALIGN.	LONG RANGE
MAJOR THOROUGHFARES	▬▬	▬ ▬	▮▮▮▮
MINOR THOROUGHFARES	▬▬	- - -	



1987

TRAFFIC CIRCULATION

FAIRMONT N.C.

CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

feet, benches should be added. Variation of pavement materials and the use of raised plant boxes for contrast are two of the methods used to achieve attractive walks.

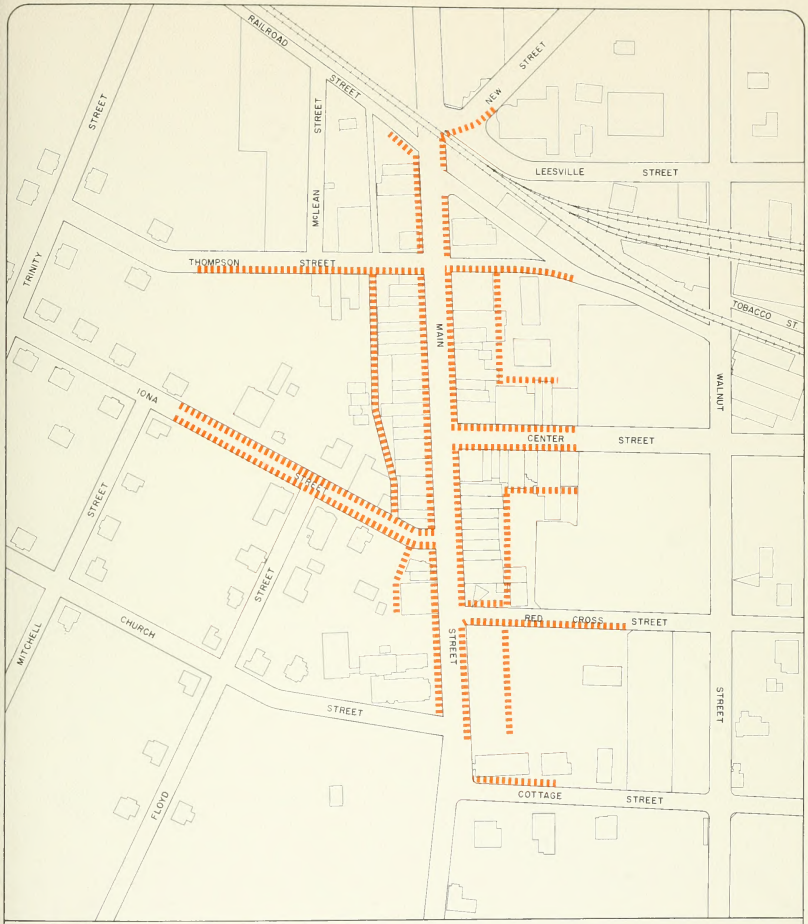
Truck Loading, Unloading, and Service Circulation

Most of the stores of the central business district back on a fifteen foot paved service alley, and include rear service entrances. It is unnecessary for service vehicles to park on Main Street. The necessary ordinance should be adopted and enforced to insure that service vehicles do not use Main Street for loading and unloading. (See Truck Loading, Unloading, and Service Map.)

Rear parking areas should be designed so that driveways are located adjacent to buildings, enabling service access when parking areas are occupied.

If the development plan is followed, both pedestrian movements and service would occur along rear walkways. It is suggested the conflict of the two movements could be reduced by permitting service only during periods of low pedestrian traffic. Portable conveyor should be used from the truck to the sidewalk so that trucks can be parked parallel with and not perpendicular to the curb.

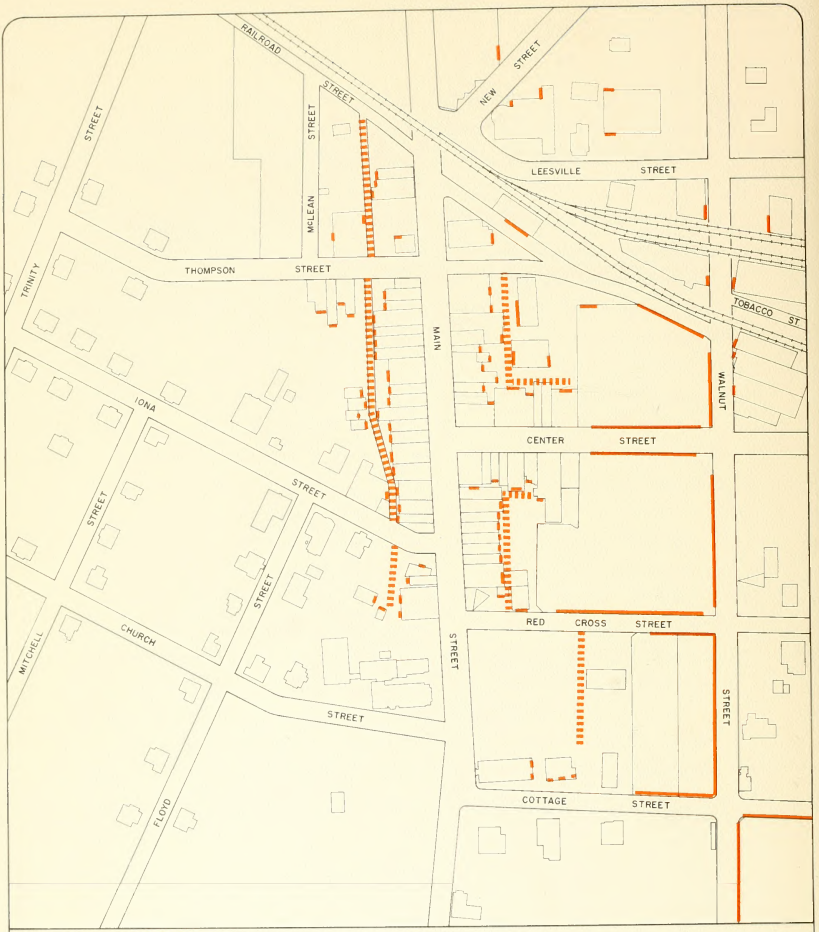
Consolidated trash pick-up is recommended by using large containers, such as dempster dumpsters. The large number of small trash cans could then be eliminated.



PROPOSED
PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION - 1987
FAIRMONT N. C.
CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

N

SCALE IN FEET



TRUCK LOADING, UNLOADING & SERVICE

FAIRMONT N.C.

CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

SERVICE ALLEY

SERVICE ACCESS

N

SCALE IN FEET

PARKING

PARKING

Inventory of Spaces - 1967

There are approximately 1,249 parking spaces located in the central business district study area. These spaces are classified by types on Table 8. (39 percent are on-street spaces and 61 percent off-street spaces.) About 648 spaces are located in the central business district core. Paved parking spaces in the study area (both on-street and off-street) include 58 percent of the total.

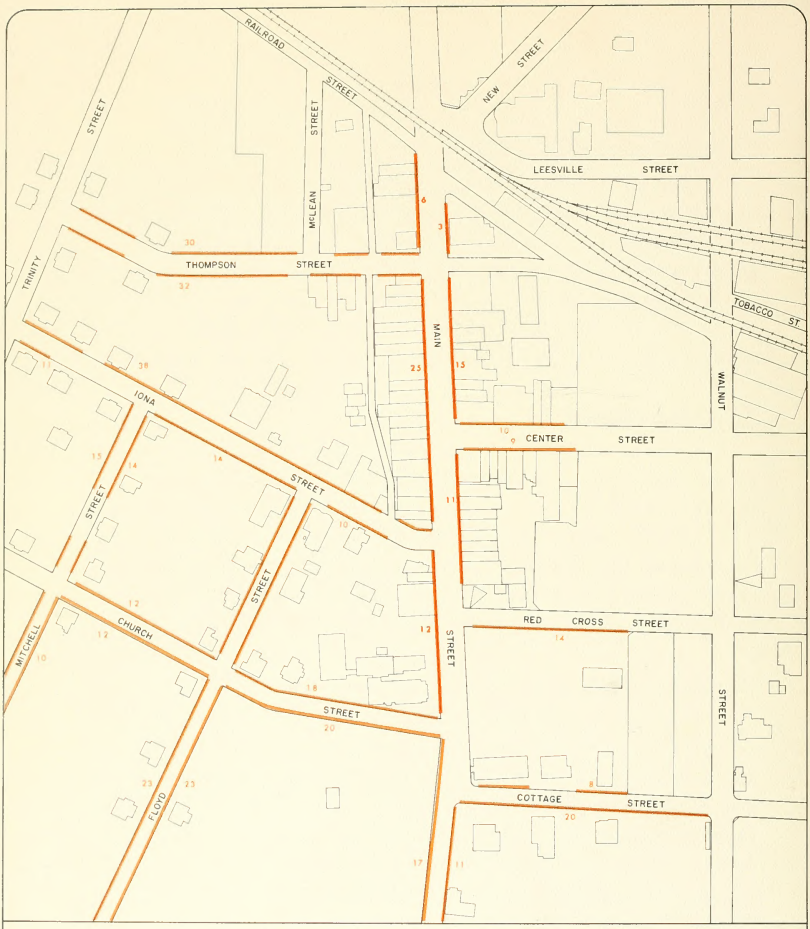
On-Street Parking

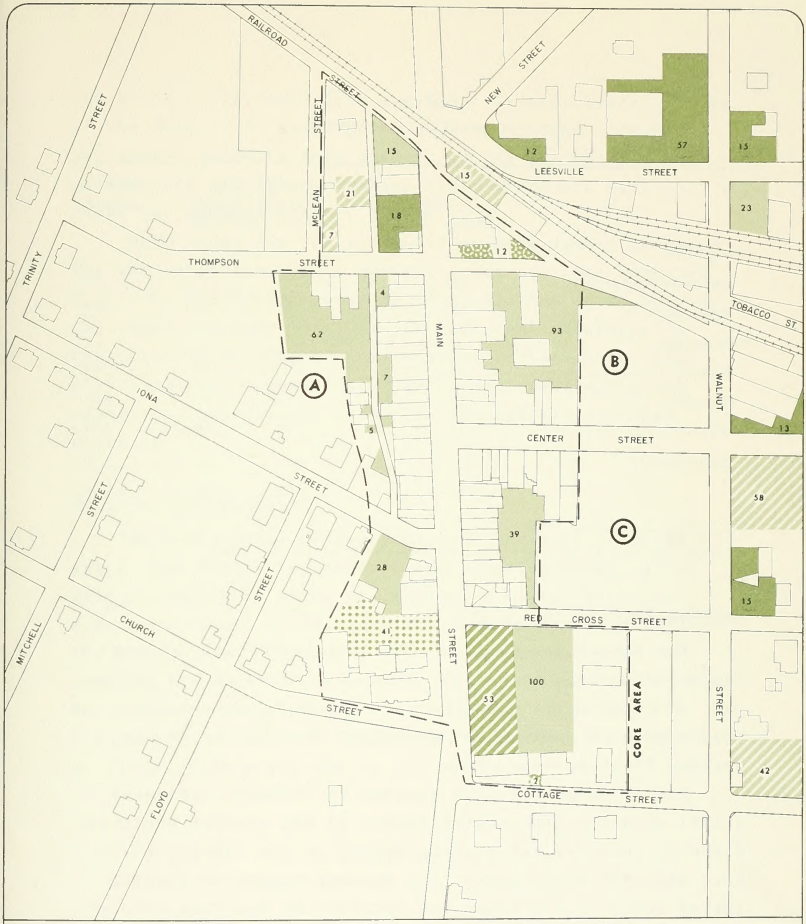
A total of 492 on-street parking spaces were counted in the Division of Community Planning survey, of which 83 are marked. All are paved and are parallel parking spaces.

Parking spaces along Main Street are marked and designated for one hour parking. All on-street paved spaces should be marked for more efficient use. (See On-Street Parking Inventory Map.)

Off-Street Parking

A total of 757 off-street parking spaces were counted in the Division of Community Planning survey; 238 are paved and 519 are unpaved. Most of the unpaved spaces are not marked. Private parking spaces total 681 with the largest number located in vacant unimproved lots, only partially usable for parking. Semi-public spaces are found at the Baptist Church lot (41 spaces). (See Off-Street Parking Inventory Map.)


RAILROAD
STREET
NEW STREET
LEESVILLE STREET
TRINITY STREET
McLEAN STREET
THOMPSON STREET
MAIN
TOBACCO ST
WALNUT
IONA STREET
CENTER STREET
RED CROSS STREET
CHURCH STREET
MITCHELL
FLOYD
COTTAGE STREET
30
32
6
3
38
23
15
10
9
11
14
12
18
20
23
17
8
MARKED PARKING
UNMARKED PARKING
FIGURE DENOTES NUMBER OF SPACES
ON STREET
PARKING INVENTORY
FAIRMONT N.C.
CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT
N
SCALE IN FEET



OFF STREET
PARKING INVENTORY

FAIRMONT N.C.

CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

	PAVED	UNPAVED
PUBLIC FOR SPECIFIC USE		
PRIVATE		
PRIVATE FOR SPECIFIC USE		
SEMI PUBLIC		

FIGURE DENOTES NUMBER OF SPACES

TABLE 9

PARKING DEMAND 1967 - 1987

Central Business District
Study Area

Use	Parking Ratio	Floor Space Sq. Feet) 1967	1987	Parking Demand[a] 1967	1987
Primary Trade	2:1	56,800	79,400	284	400
Secondary Trade	1:1	51,200	54,200	128	135
Convenience Trade	1:1	41,100	44,100	104	110
Consumer Service	1:1	52,500	65,800	131	164
Administrative, Financial and Advisory Service	1:1	20,400	32,700	51	81
				698	890

[a] Computed by Division of Community Planning, using 400 square feet per parking space.

The following development requirements are recommended for off-street parking lots.

1. Grade and pave.
2. Mark entrances and exits with directional signs.
3. Mark parking spaces.
4. Landscape parking lots with shade trees, buffers, etc.
5. Light lot.

APPEARANCE

Store Fronts

The Merchants Opinion Surveys indicated people in Fairmont are not satisfied with the general appearance of the Central Business District. There is a variety of sizes, shapes and materials in buildings, with very little unity among them. It is recommended that buildings be painted (pastel color scheme) and that sun screens be constructed to unify unrelated buildings. A continuous canopy is recommended to help provide architectural unity to buildings.

Signs

There is considerable variation in the size, shape, and condition of signs in the Central Business District. Signs help to disorganize the appearance of the business district. It is recommended that all large signs be attached flat against buildings. Small signs hung under the proposed canopy may extend at a 90 degree angle from the building.

Landscaping

It is recommended that a street tree planting plan be adopted for the Central Business District. Trees should be selected carefully in order to be functional: hardy trees will be needed to withstand compaction of the soil and poor growing condition; small trees where overhead wiring, buildings, etc. are in the way; and larger trees where shade is needed. Trees with extensive root systems that might damage sewer lines should not be used.

Recommended trees are as follows:

1. Where large trees are needed either between curb and sidewalk or outside sidewalk, it is suggested live oak be used.
2. For small trees to be planted where 3 feet by 3 feet plant pockets can be left in the sidewalk, crepe myrtle, pruned cherry laurel or Fosteri holly is suggested. Color can be added with pansies or petunias at the base of the plant.
3. Off-street parking areas and rear entrance courts need larger trees for shade, pin oak is recommended.

DOWNTOWN - 1987

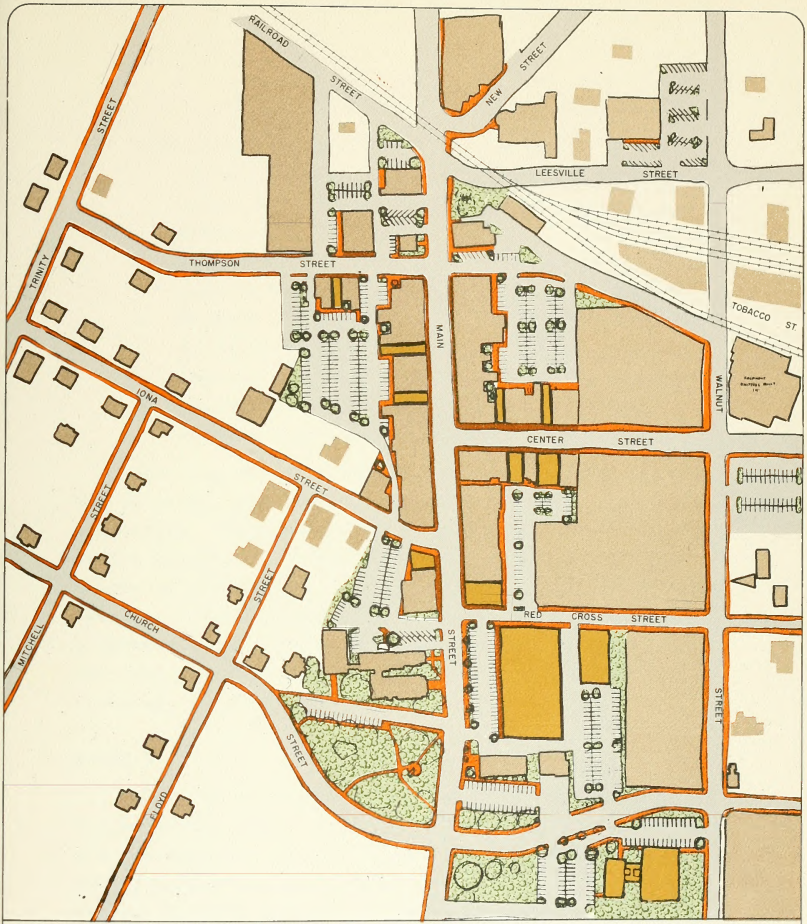
SECOND STAGE

DEVELOPMENT PLAN

FAIRMONT N.C.

CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

SECOND PLACE



VEHICLE CIRCULATION
PARKING
SIDEWALK
CANOPY
EXISTING BUILDING
PROPOSED BUILDING

FIRST STAGE
DEVELOPMENT PLAN
FAIRMONT N.C
CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

N

SCALE IN FEET

Some of the objectives of the plan are:

1. Correct parking, pedestrian, and vehicle circulation problems in the central business district.
2. Provide a more efficient relationship between central business district uses and buildings.
3. Promote the advantages of the central business district (hub of roads in the area, etc.).
4. Improve the overall appearance of the central business district including its buildings, parking areas, and walkways.

The plan makes recommendations for an improved land use pattern, appearance, walkways and parking and traffic conditions. Improvement of shopping convenience is one of the objectives of the plan. The plan includes two stages of development (Stage I and II). The second stage includes a further expansion of development to the west; a summary discussion of the plan follows. Elements of the plan are discussed in greater detail in the study (parking, circulation, etc.).

STAGE I

A number of new off-street parking areas are recommended on the plan. Pavement and marking improvement are also recommended for the vacant lots now used for parking. The parking areas recommended are located within convenient walking distance of shops and service establishments facing Main Street. The merchants survey indicates the parking problem is most critical at the intersection of Center and Main Streets.

The turning over of on-street marked parking spaces every hour is recommended and should be enforced by the Fairmont Police Department. To help solve the parking

shortage, off-street parking areas located to the rear of stores should be improved. To shorten walking distance from these parking areas to the stores, rear entrances will need to be improved. Glass doors and show windows should be added. Lighting is also needed in the off-street parking areas.

Traffic

Traffic circulation on the plan is handled by a loop street system composed of Walnut, Leesville -Railroad, Trinity and Church - Cottage Streets. Internal circulation is handled by Thompson, Iona, Center and Red Cross Streets. The loop system will funnel traffic around and into the off-street parking areas that are located in the fringe of the central business district. Traffic signals and channelization of intersections would be needed to make the system work. Street relocations and intersection improvements would also be needed at the Leesville - Railroad, Main Street intersection and at the Church - Cottage, Main Street intersection.

Rear Entrances

Access to shops from parking areas by attractive rear entrances is recommended.

The 50 on-street parking spaces located on Main Street (between Thompson and Red Cross Streets) with enforced turnover can probably be used no more than six times during the day. Adding to the problem is the tendency for shoppers to shop only during certain hours during the day or week. Off-street parking is the only solution toward providing convenient parking. (If it is not convenient to shop in downtown Fairmont, customers will shop in Lumberton, North Carolina or Florence, South Carolina.) The off-street parking should be located

to the rear of shops facing Main Street. There are approximately 500 off-street spaces in the core area which if improved could meet the existing demand. Dingy rear doorways provide no incentive for customers to use rear parking areas. A common complaint of merchants is that they are frequently blocked in if they use the rear parking areas. (Spaces should be marked.) Dusty, muddy, unlighted lots connected to stores by unattractive rear entrances do not bring shoppers to Fairmont.

Pedestrian Walkways

Walkway improvements recommended on the plan include: (1) another walk and step arrangement for the west side of Main Street, (2) canopy posts should be installed 24 inches from the street curb, (3) at intersections remove parking for thirty feet and provide marked crosswalks at all Main Street intersections, (4) new buildings on Main Street should be set back to provide a minimum twelve foot walk, (when possible set back new building to provide a fifteen to twenty foot walk), (5) rear walks should be added to the backs of shops facing Main Street and (6) dilapidated buildings on Main Street or Center Street, if torn down, could provide temporary connections to rear parking areas.

Building Space

There are a number of buildings downtown that have been renovated or have been added new - the post office, Southern National Bank, Popes, Levinson's, Waccamaw Bank and Trust Company, A & P, and two gas stations on Walnut Street.

Sites for other new buildings are indicated on the plan (1) at the shopping center (across from First Baptist Church) for primary trade, consumer services, and secondary trade, and (2) south of Cottage Street for a new

municipal and library building including also the police station, court room, jail and public restrooms.

Dilapidated buildings downtown have been replaced on the plan by proposed new buildings (these would be used for convenience trade, consumer service, and financial and advisory services).

Canopies

A continuous canopy is proposed for Main Street. The height, width and facing element used for this canopy should be coordinated on a block basis. This canopy system would insure shoppers protection from heat and rain and provide unity to the appearance of the buildings.

Trees

It is proposed that live oaks be planted in the rear parking areas (at the end of parking bays) to orient shoppers and to reduce heat and glare in the parking lots.

Cherry laurel or fosteri holly should be used in small holes in the sidewalk along Main Street.

Building Appearance

It is recommended the outward appearance of buildings be unified on a block basis by using pastel colors, plaster, or a system of sun screens.

STAGE II

To provide for additional building expansion, the second stage of the plan projects a further extension of building development to the west.

It should be remembered that the Development Plan is a general plan for the Central Business District, and before construction begins, more detail plans will have to be made by architects, landscape architects, and engineers.

The plan is a basic guide and framework from which more detailed design drawings can be made. It is essential that every activity affecting the physical development of the central business district occur within the framework of the plan if its objectives are to be accomplished.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Improve off-street parking areas and the open areas located behind stores now used for parking. Use the plan as a guide to pave, mark parking spaces, and plant shade trees in parking lots.

2. Add additional off-street parking adjacent to the core.

3. Provide pleasant pedestrian walkways with attractive boxes and plants to encourage people to use off-street parking areas.

4. Construct rear show windows and rear entrances in shops facing Main Street.

5. Unify the appearance of buildings in the Central Business District by building a continuous uniform canopy.

6. Attach large signs flat against buildings; when using small 90 degree signs attach them under the proposed canopy.

7. Modernization and improvement of individual buildings in the Central Business District is recommended especially in a paint-up effort by merchants.

IMPLEMENTATION

IMPLEMENTATION

The implementation of any plan of the Central Business District will require participation of many public and private groups: the downtown business association, major land holders, civic organizations, and municipal government. No one group can do the job alone. Part of the responsibility will fall on the public agencies and part on private groups and individuals. (See Suggested Organization for Downtown Improvement Program Chart.)

PUBLIC RESPONSIBILITY

In general, public responsibilities and funds should support street improvements.

PRIVATE RESPONSIBILITY

Improvements cannot take place without the investment of private resources and funds. No downtown improvement program can succeed without full agreement and sponsorship by private business interests in the Central Business District.

Store modernization, canopies, and rear walks must be provided by private property owners investing their own money. Government programs such as the Small Business Administration gives help by providing loans to private developers.

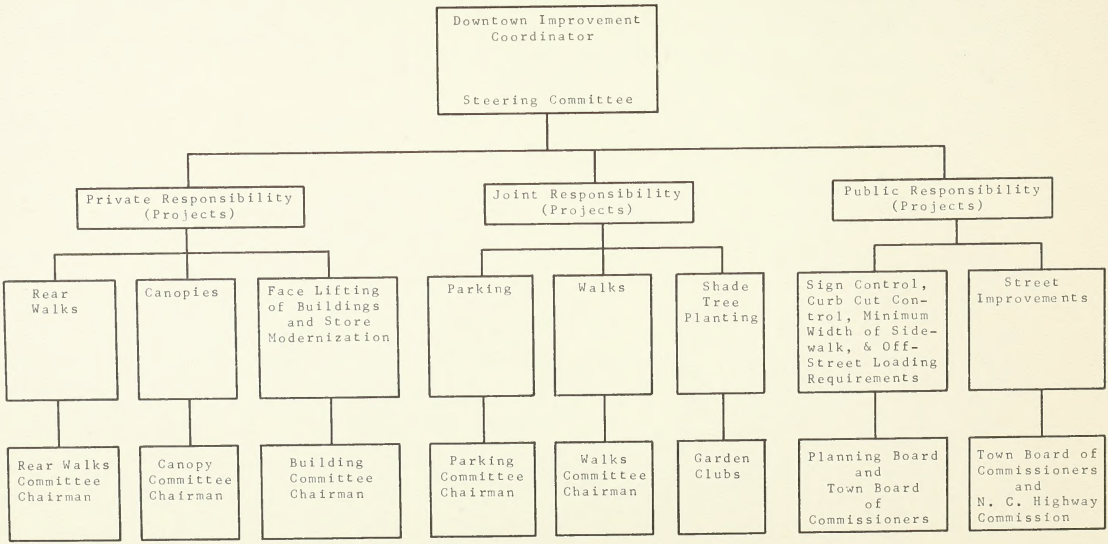
JOINT RESPONSIBILITY

Some improvements will require investment of both public and private funds to construct or maintain because of use and maintenance of the improvement. For example, both public and private funds should be used for front walks, pedestrian-ways, shade tree planting, and parking.

ORGANIZATION

A suggested organization chart follows. It recommends that one person be appointed or elected as downtown improvement coordinator. This person would coordinate the activities of private interests (committees) with those of the city.

SUGGESTED ORGANIZATION FOR
DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENT
PROGRAM



APPENDIX A

APPENDIX TABLE 1

RETAIL TRADE ESTABLISHMENTS - ROBESON COUNTY[a/]

Number of Establishments	1958	1963	Percent Change
Total Robeson County	686	785	+14.6
Remainder of County (Robeson minus Lumberton)	477	509	+6.7
Lumber, building materials, hardware, farm equipment	20	20	0
General merchandise group stores	70	50	-57.1
Food stores	125	199	+59.2
Automotive dealers	27	17	-37.0
Gasoline service stations	80	99	+23.8
Apparel, accessory stores	30	19	-36.7
Furniture, home furnishings, equipment	19	21	+10.5
Eating, drinking places	34	28	-17.6
Drug stores, proprietary stores	16	14	-12.5
Other retail stores	46	55	+19.6
Nonstore retailers	10	7	-30.0

[a/] U. S. Census of Business, 1963.

APPENDIX B

APPENDIX B, TABLE 2

SURVEY OF MERCHANTS OPINION
Conducted 1967

(Total of 60 Downtown Merchants Responded)

Question 1.

Do you own or lease your present business area?

	No. Responding	Percent
Own	17	28.3
Lease		
Leased from Fairmont Owner	37	61.7
Leased from Owner not Living in Fairmont	6	10.0
	60	100.0

Question 2.

(A) Number of persons working in your store or office (including employers, clerks, salesmen, part-time people, etc.):

Total Number 277 Average 4.6 per store

(B) How many persons working in your store including yourself normally drive to work?

(Number of cars)

Total Number 212 Average 3.5 per store

(C) Where do they normally park?

	Total Number	% of Total
Off-street	155	78.3
On-street	43	21.7
	198	100.0

(D) How many off-street parking spaces do you provide for?

Owner and employees	51	Average .9
Customers	231	Average 3.9

Question 3.

How much floor space do you occupy?

Total number of square feet 158,195 Average 2,637 square feet per respondent.

Question 4.

(A) Do you plan to expand your business within the next five years?

	Number Responding	% of Total
Yes	12	20.0
No	48	80.0
	60	100.0

(B) How much additional floor space will be built?

Total number of square feet 7,200 Average 1,800

(C) How many additional employees will you employ?

Total 12 Average 3 per respondent

(D) When you expand where will you do so?

	Number Responding	% of Total
On present site	8	66.7
In Fairmont CBD	4	33.3
	12	100.0

(E) If you were to establish a business for the first time would you locate where you are presently located?

	Number Responding	% of Total
Yes	34	56.7
No	26	43.3
	60	100.0

Question 5.

Estimate the approximate percentage of your total dollars receipts in 1965 received for customers living in:

	% of Total
Town limits of Fairmont	28.8
Retail trade areas shown on the map	63.3
Area beyond that shown on the retail trade area map	7.9
	100.0

Question 6.

(A) Do you feel the present supply of parking space in the Downtown area is adequate?

	Number Responding	% of Total
Yes	13	21.7
No	47	78.3
	60	100.0

(B) How can parking conditions be improved?

	Number Responding
Better use of existing spaces	34
Provide meters	18
Provide more off-street parking	49
	101

(C) Who do you feel should provide off-street parking facilities?

	Number Responding	% of Total
Individual business establishments	3	7.1
Merchants cooperative cooperation	28	66.7
Other	11	26.2
	42	100.0

(D) Would you be willing to contribute financially (in proportion to your direct benefit) to provide off-street parking for customers in downtown Fairmont?

	Number Responding	% of Total
Yes	37	61.7
No	23	38.3
	60	100.0

Question 7.

What improvements are needed to solve major problems confronting Fairmont's downtown?

	Number Responding
Provide more off-street parking	41
Improve traffic circulation	19
Improve downtown street lighting	15
Build attractive well lighted walks from stores and off-street parking areas	12
Cover sidewalks	16
Improve sidewalk pavement	28
Build a mall	8
Provide benches downtown	16
Place tub plants and trees downtown	16
Improve the exterior appearance of stores	50
Improve the interior appearance of stores	44
Provide a wider selection of merchandise	15
Provide for later store closing hours	5
Provide public restrooms downtown	37
Other improvements needed	14

Question 8.

Indicate 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th priority for improvements.

	Number Responding
Provide more off-street parking	22
Improve the interior appearance of stores	11
Improve the exterior appearance of stores	10
Provide public rest rooms downtown	6
Place tub plants downtown	3
	52

*Respondents checked more than one answer.

APPENDIX C

TABLE 3

CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT
CORE PARKING DEMAND - 1967

Use	Parking Ratio	Floor Space (Sq. Foot)	Parking Space[a] Demand
Primary Retail Trade	2:1	56,800	284
Secondary Retail Trade	1:1	13,900	34
Convenience Trade	1:1	25,300	63
Consumer Services	1:1	51,400	129
Administrative, Financial, and Advisory Services	1:1	20,200	51
			561

[a] Computed at 400 square feet per parking space.

TABLE 4

PARKING DEMAND BY BLOCK - 1967

Block[a]	Parking Spaces Available			Demand	Surplus or Deficiency Of Spaces
	On-Street	Off-Street	Total		
A	45	78	123	169	-46
B	25	93	118	173	-55
C	20	39	59	125	-66
Total	90	210	300	467	-167

[a] See Parking Inventory Map for location of Blocks.

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